

Message Text

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PERSONAL FROM AMBASSADOR UNGER TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HOLBROOKE

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS : EAID, TW, US
SUBJECT : AID FUNDING FOR ASIA FOUNDATION PROGRAMMING

1. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS WILL MEET THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF CONTINUED AID FUNDING OF ASIA FOUNDATION PROGRAMS. BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE WITH ASIA FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES IN LAOS, THAILAND AND THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, I URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO ASSIST THE FOUNDATION IN ITS EFFORTS TO CONVINCE MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE WISDOM OF CONTINUED USG FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ASIA FOUNDATION PROGRAMS. EVIDENTLY ONE CRITICISM RAISED HAS BEEN THAT ASIA FOUNDATION HAS NOT FOLLOWED ITS CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE TO ASSIST THE POOREST MAJORITY IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE IT OPERATES. MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT NOT ONLY HAVE THE ASIA FOUNDATION'S PROGRAMS WELL SERVED THE POOR AND UNDERPRIVILEGED, BUT DUE TO THE FLEXIBILITY THE FOUNDATION HAS DEMONSTRATED, THE RELATIVE AUTONOMY IT HAS ENJOYED, AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE IMAGINATION OF

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ITS STAFF, IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO APPROACH THE UNIQUE PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING ASIAN NATIONS WITH A REFRESHING AND HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE ORIGINALITY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CARRYING OUT THE GOAL OF SERVING U.S. INTERESTS IN ASIA. THE FOUNDATION'S CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE UNDER THE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, LEVELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AND TYPES OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS FACED IN LAOS, THAILAND AND ON TAIWAN, DEMONSTRATING THE UNIQUE ABILITIES OF THIS ORGANIZATION TO ADAPT ITS PROGRAMS TO EXISTING AND IMMEDIATE NEEDS, AS WELL AS LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING GOALS. ASIA FOUNDATION'S OWN ADMINISTRATIVE LEANNESS HAS BEEN ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ITS SUCCESS, ALONG WITH ITS ABILITY TO FINANCE STARTER PROJECTS ON A SMALLER SCALE THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH AID PROGRAMS AND TO ENLIST LOCAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUPPORT TO CARRY SUCH PROJECTS FORWARD.

2. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT AID FUNDS ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUED OPERATION AND SUCCESS OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION. I FEEL THAT THE RECORD OF SUCCESS ALREADY ESTABLISHED BY THIS ORGANIZATION AND THE ENERGY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS PRESENT PROGRAMS AMPLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE FOUNDATION DESERVES THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE USG. AS WE PROCEED WITH OUR ATTEMPTS TO ASSIST THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDLY ASIAN NATIONS AND MAINTAIN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THEIR PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WE SHOULD NOT ABANDON AN ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED ITS USEFULNESS, PERTINENCE AND POPULARITY, AS WELL AS ITS ABILITY TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT HAS BEEN IMPRACTICAL OR UNECONOMICAL
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TO INTRODUCE A FORMAL USG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

3. I URGE MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE TO CAREFULLY EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY REDUCTION IN AID FUNDING FOR ASIA FOUNDATION. I BELIEVE THAT THE ASIA FOUNDATION PROGRAM, MODEST AS IT IS, REPRESENTS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND PROMISING CHANNELS FOR ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT AND FOR REACHING THOSE WHO MOST NEED HELP. ANY REDUCTION IN THE SCOPE OF ASIA FOUNDATION'S ACTIVITIES WOULD REPRESENT A SHORT-SIGHTED APPROACH TO MEETING DEMONSTRATED NEEDS AND WOULD BE CONTRARY TO OUR OWN SELF-INTEREST. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THIS CAN BE AVOIDED. UNGER

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